

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-12 DPW-01 EUR-25 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 ACDA-19 RSR-01 /159 W
----- 129257

P R 061235 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9779

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5829

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR II DAILY SITREP APRIL 6

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL NHA TRANG BEING REPEATED

QUOTE

NHA TRANG 368

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR II DAILY SIT REP, APRIL 6

1. SUMMARY: INTENSITY OF ENEMY ACTIVITY INCREASED MARKEDLY ON APRIL 5 ALTHOUGH INCIDENT COUNT REMAINED LOW. VNMA COMMANDANT SEES GVN STRENGTH NECESSARY TO MAINTENANCE OF " PEACE." VILLAGE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED IN BINH THUAN.

2. MILITARY SITUATION: FIGHTING ON APRIL 5 WAS SHARPEST IN THE REGION IN ABOUT A MONTH. ACTION WAS CONCENTRATED IN TWO NORTHERN COSTAL PROVINCES OF BINH DINH AND PHU YEN, WHERE 12 OF TOTAL 16 INCIDENTS OCCURRED; REMAINDER SCATTERED THROUGH KHANH HOA, PLEIKU AND BINH THUAN. CASUALTY FIGURES WERE HIGH (RVNAF: NINE KIA, 24 WIA; VC: 31 KIA) CONSIDERING THE FAIRLY SMALL NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

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BUT MORE SERIOUS ASPECT WAS COMMUNIST DEPARTURE FROM HIT- AND- RUN TACTICS TYPICAL OF RECENT WEEKS. IN SEVERAL APRIL 5 ACTIONS, VC APPEARED RESOLVED TO TAKE AND HOLD THEIR OBJECTIVES THROUGH EMPLOY-
MENT OF LARGER FORCES AND WILLINGNESS TO TAKE HIGHER CASUALTIES.

3. CLEAREST EXAMPLES WERE VC ATTACK ON RANGER COMPANY IN SOUTHERN HOAI NHON DISTRICT, BINH DINH, IN WHICH ATTACKERS PENETRATED DEFENSIVE POSITION AND WERE REPULSED ONLY AFTER BITTER FIGHTING IN WHICH BOTH SIDES SUSTAINED HEAVY LOSSES, AND BATTALION- SIZE ATTACK ON RF COMPANY DEPLOYED IN DEFENSE OF ADJACENT HAMLETS, XUAN PHU AND DIEN DIEN, ON COAST OF TUY AN DISTRICT, PHU YEN. IN LATTER INCIDENT, RF COMPANY RETREATED UNDER FIRE. SECTOR LATER DEPLOYED AN RF BATTALION WITH TACAIR SUPPORT TO RETAKE THE TWO HAMLETS; BATTLE THERE IS STILL GOING ON.

4. MEANWHILE, ANALYSIS OF GVN " TERRITORIAL SECURITY OPERATIONS" (CUOC KIEM- SOAT AN- NINH LANH- THO) IN ONE AREA OF PHU MY DISTRICT, BINH, DINH, INDICATES THAT SIX OF SEVEN HAMLETS WHERE FRIENDLY TROOPS ARE PRESENTLY ACTIVE WERE RATED " V" IN LATEST HES; SEVENTH GOT AN " E" RATING. NEVERTHELESS, ENEMY PRESENCE IN MOST OF THESE HAMLETS WAS AUGMENTED AT TIME OF CEASE- FIRE, AND GVN HAS AT LEAST AN OUTPOST IN MOST OF THEM.

5. GVN REORGANIZATION: LTC LO VAN BAO HAS REPLACED LTC NGUYEN VAN NGHIEM AS PHU BON PROVINCE CHIEF. NGHIEM PLANS TO DEPART CHEO REO APRIL 7 WITH ONWARD ASSIGNMENT, IF ANY, STILL UNKNOWN.

6. GVN ATTITUDES TOWARD CEASE- FIRE: MAJ. GEN. LAM QUANG THO, FORMER CG 18 TH DIVISION AND NOW ON SECOND TOUR AS COMMANDANT OF NATIONAL MILITARY ACCADEMY, DISCUSSED CEASE- FIRE WITH DALAT POLOFF APRIL 4. IN THO' S VIEW, PEACE WILL NOT COME " LIKE A GIFT FROM HEAVEN" AND CAN BE MAINTAINED ONLY IF GVN RETAINS A POSITION OF STRENGTH. SPECIFICALLY, IF DRV CONTINUES TO INFILTRATE TROOPS AND ARMOR INTO THE SOUTH, THO PREDICTS THAT THIEU WILL " REACT STRONGLY." THO BELIEVES GVN IS GIVING ICCS A CHANCE TO RESOLVE THE SEIGE OF TONG LE CHAN; IF ICCS INTERVENTION FAILS, THO ADVOCATES STRONG ACTION BECAUSE " WE CANNOT ALLOW AN ENTIRE BATTALION TO BE ANNIHILATED
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7. TPJMC: GVN MEMBERS OF FORMER KONTUM AND BAN ME THUOT FPJMT' S RETURNED APRIL 5 FROM SERIES OF MEETINGS IN SAIGON. THEY NOW SAY THAT - CONTRARY TO THEIR EARLIER UNDERSTANDING - THEY WILL BECOME
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON05829
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730434/aaaahsea.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 15 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15-Aug-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <27-Nov-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971202
Subject: MR II DAILY SITREP APRIL 6 FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL NHA TRANG BEING REPEATED QUOTE NHA TRANG 368 E.
O. 11652 : GDS TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS S SUBJECT: MR II DAILY SIT REP, APRIL 6
TAGS: PINS, VS, MILI, PINT
To: EA
JEC PARIS
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005